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AUTHOR	Neff, Pauline
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ABSTRACT

This publication describes a year-round program for emotionally disturbed girls between the ages of 10 and 15. The program, which is geared to delinquency prevention, does not accept "hard-core" delinquents. It revolves about a 26-day camping trip on which participants face up to wilderness situations that require them to accept responsibility for their actions. Paraprofessional counselors use group work methods to help girls learn problem-solving skills while on the trip. Parents are expected to attend group meetings while their daughters are on the trip. Trained volunteers do followup work after the girls return home. Results indicate that the program has a definite, positive impact on the participants. (BW)

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By

Pauline Neff

Girls' Adventure Trails, Inc.
Dallas, Texas 75235

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Office of Human Development
Office of Youth Development
Washington, D.C. 20201
(SRS) 73-26033

FOREWORD

This publication describes a year-round program which was developed for emotionally disturbed girls in a Texas community. The program "Girls' Adventure Trails" is innovative, therapeutic and obviously effective, in a period which finds a spiraling rise in delinquency offenses involving girls. Originally funded by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the program is now supported by public and private agencies in a concerted community effort to assist troubled young girls whose behavior reflects an anti-social and delinquent pattern.

We commend the effort of community involvement in aiding troubled adolescent girls, and suggest similar programs for communities seeking ways to create better tomorrows for today's youth.

James A. Hart
Commissioner
Office of Youth Development

Chapter I. SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

What kind of tomorrow do the girls of your community face?

Will it be a bright day of equality—a chance to excel as women never have before? Or will it be a time when growing numbers of female inmates fill penitentiaries and mental institutions?

Adolescent girls of today find themselves with more freedom in a society that is less inhibited than ever before. If a girl is "well-adjusted," she will find opportunities for self-fulfillment that were formerly closed to her.

But what if she is not? And what if she has problem parents or too little money? What if she feels doors closed to her because of race or failing grades at school?

A girl with such problems may use her new freedom to compensate for her unhappy situation with drugs, may act out her resentments through promiscuity or vandalism, may run away to a counter culture life that leads to crime, or may withdraw into mental illness.

Few communities realize that the number of delinquent girls is growing much faster than the number of delinquent boys. Even fewer communities do anything to prevent girls from becoming delinquent. Instead, they wait until a girl is addicted to drugs, pregnant, or under a court order before they try to "help" her. They put it off until ugly scar tissue disfigures her future, then pour funds into plastic surgery to cover up a bitterness she will never overcome.

Dallas' Girls' Adventure Trails, however, recognizes that delinquency is growing among girls. It knows that family problems, the inability to achieve at school, almost anything in a girl's life that makes her different from the rest of society, can lead to delinquency. It believes that in order to make better tomorrows for women, it must help girls learn to solve their problems today.

What is Girls' Adventure Trails?

It is a year-round community service for emotionally disturbed girls between the ages of 10 and 15. Its approach to delinquency prevention is unique.

When girls are accepted by Girls' Adventure Trails, they are taken on a 26-day wilderness camping trip. The objective is therapeutic, not just recreational, although girls do enjoy the trips. They undergo individual and group counseling. They face up to wilderness situations that require them to accept responsibility for their behavior. They learn to relate to other campers. By the end of the trip, many come back with skills they need to solve their social and behavioral problems at home, at school, and with their peers.

Because Girls' Adventure Trails believes that the girls it accepts have the potential for overcoming maladjustments, it prefers to respond to them as troubled rather

than emotionally disturbed youngsters.

Lupe's problem was her poor family situation. This mature-looking 13-year-old with the pierced ears was covering up for a father who abused her while her mother worked at night. There was never quite enough money. Because English was not spoken in the home, schoolwork came hard to her. Teachers began to discover Lupe stealing other students' lunch money and clothing. Lupe didn't mean to be bad. To get away from it all, she ran away.

Laurie's problem was an I.Q. of 90 and a school phobia. Small for her age, this 10-year-old walked and sat tautly, with her arms held stiffly to her sides and her hands clenched into fists. In the classroom, she bothered other students and went out of her way to irritate the teacher. Her parents, who beat her frequently, could only get her to go to school by threatening such punishment.

Beth's mother recently divorced her stepfather and because of financial problems, placed all the children of the family except the oldest girl in a children's home. Beth was jealous of the older sister. She worried that she would never be able to return to her mother. This brown-haired beauty of 12 hid her maturing figure in ugly clothing and spent her free time in a dark bedroom. Friendless, she lashed out at houseparents who tried to help.

Girls' Adventure Trails recognized that all three girls seemed destined for problem tomorrows. It could not change Lupe's family problems, Laurie's low I.Q., or Beth's separation from her mother, but it did help all three to accept their situations and find positive ways of dealing with their frustrations. In spite of their handicaps, these girls found fulfillment.

Does Girls' Adventure Trails really work?

Among the 230 girls who participated in the program during its first two years, fully 45 percent were having school problems. Others had withdrawn behavior, were hostile, showed poor school conduct, or had a history of truancy or running away. All had more than one problem. Some 80 percent of the girls between 13 and 15 years of age confessed to counselors that they had experimented with drugs.

A recent evaluation showed that almost 70 percent of the 230 girls who have participated in the Girls' Adventure Trails program experienced significant improvement in personal conduct, school achievement, and peer group relations.

Equally as exciting is Girls' Adventure Trails' success with a situational approach to education for these underachievers. To many professional educators, the new teaching methods used by the Girls' Adventure Trails program appear to be the key to solving many behavioral problems.

How much does Girls' Adventure Trails cost?

In its first year, including all administrative costs and expenses, Girls' Adventure Trails spent over $1,000 per girl.

Is the price too high?

Compare it to the $4,000 per year that the Texas Youth Council pays for keeping a girl in a State correctional school, or to the $10,000 to $12,000 annual cost of residential care in a private school for the emotionally disturbed.

How much would you pay to save a girl like Kathy?

With an alcoholic father and a mother who was frequently in and out of mental institutions, Kathy lashed out at what she saw as an unfair world. She continually caused trouble at school and had to be called to the principal's office 54 times for misbehavior. By the time she was 15, this girl with the long blonde hair and sprinkle of freckles not quite covered by make-up had been involved in a burglary with a neighborhood gang.

The Juvenile Department gave Kathy an ultimatum: Either go on a Girls' Adventure Trails trip or face possible placement in a State correctional school. Despite her hostility, Kathy was helped by the Girls' Adventure Trails counselor to set some goals before the trip.

"I want to learn to get along with my teachers. I want to make some new friends," Kathy said.

On her trip, Kathy learned more than how to set up a tent and climb a mountain. She learned to discuss her problems instead of running from them. She learned that to help other girls is to help yourself.

On her return she set new goals: "I want to help my mother. When something bad happens, I want to discuss it with someone and find a solution before I act."

Only a month later the real test came. Kathy's father deserted the family and her mother returned to the mental hospital. Kathy had full responsibility for herself and a younger sister.

Kathy felt like running away. But instead she talked over the problem with the Girls' Adventure Trails staff. A staff member contacted Kathy's school counselor. Because of her improved conduct, the school counselor was able to arrange for Kathy to enter a distributive education program. Kathy could go to class half a day and work an 8-hour shift at a department store.

For three months, Kathy made her grades, ran the household, worked, and paid the bills. Even when her mother returned, Kathy realized that she, rather than her mother, would have to be the breadwinner.

Kathy has been going to school and supporting her family for two years now. She hasn't been called to the principal's office a single time. Her department store coworkers even selected her as "employee of the month."

Sometimes Kathy gets depressed. When she does, she may call the Girls' Adventure Trails volunteer worker.

"Remember when your group was backpacking up the mountain and it started snowing? That was hard, but you didn't give up," the volunteer reminds her.

"I remember. I never thought we'd make it," Kathy says. "I guess I shouldn't give up now, either, should I?"

Can communities afford not to help their own Kathys?

Perhaps your community does not need a separate agency like Girls' Adventure Trails to help problem girls. Schools and other existing institutions might incorporate the following five unique features of the program into their own work.

1. Girls' Adventure Trails uses state and national parks as campsites, eliminating costly investments in building and land. The most expensive equipment required by the program is a bus. Many school systems already have buses and could put them to use in a summer wilderness camping program.

2. Paraprofessional counselors use groupwork methods to help girls learn problem-solving skills. The same techniques could be used in existing camps, in classrooms, or in other recreational programs. Teachers of staff could be trained in these methods by working as Girls' Adventure Trails counselors during leaves of absence from their regular jobs.

3. Girls who are underachievers at school have the chance to learn through their interest and participation in their surroundings, rather than through textbooks. This situational approach to education could be used for problem students in school settings.

4. Girls' Adventure Trails involves parents as well as girls in working for changed behavior. The parent group discussions and role-playing methods could be adopted by other institutions.

5. Volunteers, rather than staff, are trained to work as liaison between staff and clients and as follow-up workers after the girls return home from their camping trips. Agencies with limited budgets could make their programs more effective through such use of volunteers.

A school official who is delighted with the improved behavior and academic motivation of the girls she has referred to the program says, "Girls' Adventure Trails, basically, is just people helping other people. There are many more in our nation who could help troubled youth if they knew how important it is and how simply it can be done. In fact, I feel we could revolutionize our society if people everywhere really cared enough to try."

Only 21 percent of the youngsters referred to the Dallas Juvenile Department in 1966 were girls. By 1971, however, the percentage had grown to 28 percent—a total of 2,313 girls in trouble.

How many emotionally disturbed girls on the verge of delinquency are in your community?

No figures exist. School officials cannot measure behavior that has not yet been lived. Juvenile authorities cannot count numbers of children who may someday commit a misdemeanor or a felony. But professionals know that there are many girls who will certainly end up with troubled tomorrows if preventive measures are not taken today.

Chapter II. A TYPICAL TRIP

Ten teen-age girls sit in a green Girls' Adventure Trails bus which is parked beside a lake. Dragonflies hover over a blossoming deer mulberry. Nearby a squirrel jets from pine to pine. But something is wrong with this tranquil scene.

Around the remains of a campfire, dirty tin plates are scattered. Ants march into the insides of abandoned bread wrappers and a greasy skillet.

The three young counselors—married couple, Candy and Mike, and a single woman, Marilyn—pace quietly along the nearby lake shore. Occasionally, they hear a shout or a curse from the bus.

It has been over an hour now since the girls decided they would not do their agreed upon team jobs and retreated to the bus.

Before they left Dallas on the trip, the girls themselves had divided the camp chores into two-girl team jobs, rotating chores and partners. They themselves had set the times for getting up in the morning and had planned the menus.

Last night they had agreed they would go swimming after breakfast. But when the counselors reminded Sherry and Lynn this morning that it was time to put the food in the bus and wash breakfast dishes, they revolted.

"All we do is ride around in this bus, do their work, wash dishes," muttered Sherry. She stomped to the bus door and yelled, "Take us home!"

"Yeah, Mike, come drive us home," shouts Lynn, her face copying the scowl on Sherry's.

But it is Vera who breaks the impasse: "Hey, I want to go swimming. It's no fun sitting on this bus all day." She gets off the bus.

"Let's huddle up!"

Lynn turns away from Sherry, who is grinding her cigarette into the bus seat. She looks at the lake. Heat waves seem to bounce off the rocky shore. She is so hot her legs are sticking to the bus seat. Suddenly she jumps out the door. One by one the girls follow.

Automatically the girls begin to sit down in a circle. They know that any time a goal is not reached or attitudes are unacceptable, they must drop everything for a problem session.

The "huddle-up" won't end until the girls have stated what the problem is and come up with a "line of action" that will help them solve it. Each girl will have the opportunity to help solve the problem and to help Sherry and Lynn.

As in most huddle-ups, the problem is solved through peer group pressure.

"I think the problem is that Sherry and Lynn won't wash the dishes, and so nobody is getting to go swimming," says Marta. "Sherry's always gettings us into trouble."

"You're a dirty liar? Nobody does a darn thing around this place

but me. I'm tired of doing everybody else's team job for them," rages Sherry. Suddenly she jumps to her feet and makes a dash up the dirt road and into the trees.

In so doing, Sherry has broken the agreement that the group made in their pre-trip planning session. At that time, all agreed that the group would always stay together. Fortunately Mike will have her back quickly, explaining the need for his action and encouraging her co-operation.

While Sherry is away, the other two counselors help the girls realize that it is not Sherry they dislike, only her behavior.

"Has anyone else ever felt like Sherry does about doing team jobs? Is there a way to help her act differently?" asks a counselor.

"Maybe we really could do our part better," suggests Lynn, who is now crying because she feels that she caused Sherry to run away.

"Maybe we could remind her of her goal to try to get along better with other people," says Vera.

By the time Mike has brought Sherry back, the group is in a mood to help her rather than complain. But Sherry doesn't give in easily. She retreats into defiant silence for nearly an hour.

It takes all the group's irritation at not getting to go swimming, plus their new insights into helping other people, to make an impact on Sherry.

When finally Sherry does "come around," the huddle-up proves to be the turning point for her as well as the group. During the first week of the trip each girl has been uncertain of her role. Many have continued the negative behavior that has gotten them into trouble before. Huddle-ups have interrupted supper, fun times, and even sleeping.

"You have many good leadership qualities and the girls follow you. We could have a lot more fun on the trip if you led in the right way," counselor Candy had once told Sherry in a one-to-one discussion.

After this huddle-up, Sherry begins to realize that she really can lead the group in a positive rather than a negative way. The girls realize that they themselves, rather than the counselors, have the responsibility for what they will do as a group.

That night, as every night, the group has a "pow-wow." As the pow-wow fire-builders strike a single match to the dry branches they have prepared, the flames shoot up to a starry sky. Shadows dance over the girls' faces. They look thoughtful, more trusting, unafraid. Somewhere a coyote howls and the girls edge closer together.

"How did our day go?" asks Mike.

"We had some problems. Our huddle-up lasted so long we didn't get to eat lunch. And we lost part of our swimming time, too," says Lynn.

"But I feel good, because we really helped each other after the huddle-up. We had a lot of fun swimming," says Marta.

"I didn't do very well, but every-

body helped me. Tomorrow I'm going to set a goal to do my team jobs without complaining," says Sherry.

The pow-wow is an evaluation session serving a different purpose from problem sessions. Counselors help the girls discuss the day's activities in a realistic manner, always setting a positive, helpful tone. It is a time for receiving praise from each other, for positive behavior, and for setting tomorrow's goals to overcome weaknesses that showed up today.

At this pow-wow, counselors are able to praise the girls for having a good huddle-up and for making their plans wisely for the rest of the day. Soon the fire has died out. The girls sing a closing song chosen by the pow-wow builders. They all walk up the trail quietly to their two-girl pup tents to drop off to sleep, feeling good about themselves.

For the next few days the girls will be preparing for their main trip goal—in this case, making a 200-mile trip by canoe down an Arkansas river. It will be a hard trip. There will be adventure around every bend.

Where there are sand bars and shallows, the girls will have to carry canoes, tents, food, and supplies through the thickets. In some places the water will be so dirty it will have to be strained, boiled, and treated with halazone before they can drink it. There will be rainy days, make-shift lunches, and time out for huddle-ups.

But when the girls paddle the last mile, they will know they have been successful in accomplishing a physical feat that few other girls their age have accomplished. Because they have won out over the river's obstacles, they know they can go home and face the shoals and murky water in their own lives.

Each Girls' Adventure Trails group plans a challenging group goal—either a long canoe trip in summer or a rugged backpacking trek and mountain climb in cold months. As girls learn not to give up, they break down the failure cycle that has begun to destroy their self-confidence.

Rather than punishment for improper behavior, the girls must face the reality of the natural consequences of their own acts. If camping is to be enjoyable, the girls must learn to get along with each other as well as to master the skills of setting up tents, cutting wood, and cooking over campfires.

Actual education takes place naturally as girls become interested in the historic sites they visit, the wildlife, and growing things at campsites. They are encouraged to write stories about their interests and fun experiences for the trip newspaper.

When they return to school, they will not be penalized for having missed a month of classwork. Most of the girls will show statistically significant improvement in academic motivation and attitudes toward parents and teachers.

While the girls are away, their parents are prompted to explore their own problems. To have their

daughters accepted into the Girls' Adventure Trails program, parents must agreed to attend the pretrip orientation program and two group meetings held during the trip.

Let's look at the first of the two evening parent meetings held at Girls' Adventure Trails headquarters. Since many of the girls have no father in the house, few men are present. But there are many mothers, and even a few grandmothers, of all races and economic levels. They are waiting nervously for the program to begin.

Two volunteers, each of whom has been assigned five of the families on this trip, smile and chat with the parents. They already seem like friends. They have been the ones to phone parents to remind them of meetings. Through staff reports, they know each girl's problems. If parents want to talk about those problems, the volunteers can discuss them intelligently and in a supportive manner.

When parents have assembled, discussion leaders present a slide show of the girls' first week away. As the parents see their daughters eating around a campfire, visiting museums, washing their hair at a campsite, swimming, and cooking, they smile in relief. Many have received letters in which their daughters beg to be allowed to return home. They are reassured to see that the girls really are having fun.

Soon a scene of huddle-up is shown on the screen.

"That's Sherry crying! Why is she crying?" a father fumes. The discussion leader calmly replies that most girls cry some time on the trip. She explains that Sherry is learning news ways of working out her problems.

"We want you parents to understand what your daughters are learning. We're going to pose some of the problems the girls are facing. We want you to pretend to be your daughter and find a solution as a group," says the leader.

Distressed faces reflect the inadequacies many feel toward solving problems. But the discussion leader helps the parents brainstorm some ideas. They discuss several solutions and decide on the best approach.

By the end of the night they have learned the importance of letting everyone express feelings. And they have learned how their daughters are taught problem-solving skills.

A pow-wow is held at the end of the meeting. Parents evaluate the night's activities and set such goals for the next meeting as discussing ways of handling discipline.

"How do you know when you need professional help for your daughter?" one wants to know.

"Let's talk about how you get children to communicate with you," says another.

By the second meeting, parents are more relaxed with each other. They are able to enjoy the second week's slides and are eager for group discussion.

"What's the difference between discipline and punishment?" asks the discussion leader. Parents quickly express their views on whether to spank or not. Many look

relieved to find out that other parents have problems getting their children to obey.

Eventually, with the discussion leader's help, they conclude that it is up to each individual parent to decide whether he will spank. But discipline, they discover, is ongoing. Even if they are working parents, they realize that they must take the time to discuss problems and work out solutions with their youngsters as the problems come up—just as the counselors on the trip bring everything to a halt for problem-solving huddle-ups.

"Will my daughter be different when she returns?" This is a question invariably asked at the second parent meeting.

"The daughters will be the same girls," the leader says, "but they will have new problem-solving skills."

"It will be up to you as parents to encourage those new abilities. And since you have new understanding, you can give it to them," suggests the leader. She reminds parents to find ways to praise their daughter's acts more often than criticize.

Without overwhelming them, the leader helps the parents gain insight into the family problems. If the leader feels some families need further counseling, she may refer them to the proper agencies at the time of the posttrip evaluation.

A third parent meeting may be held after the trip if 80 percent of the parents request it. Many groups do meet again.

After the trip, Girls' Adventure Trails will depend on the volunteers' services for follow-up. These lay-workers have been skillfully trained to work through all kinds of situations. If some girls need further professional help after the trip evaluation, the volunteers work with the Girls' Adventure Trails staff to refer them to the proper agency.

At last comes the morning when parents and daughters are reunited.

"Will my daughter feel any differently toward me?"

"Will the trip really help her?"

"Can I give her the same kind of help the counselors do?"

These are the questions which may be going through parents' heads.

As the bus travels the last of the trip's 2500 miles, through Dallas traffic, similar questions may be in the girls' minds.

"Will my parents approve of me?"

"Will they really let me say how I feel about problems?"

"Will I be able to talk to the other kids at school?" they may wonder.

As the bus door opens, the first girl off shrieks and throws herself into her mother's arms. There are tears for some and broad smiles for others. For all, it is a time for feeling very proud.

A few days later, parents, daughters, counselors, and volunteer gather at the Girls' Adventure Trails office to evaluate the trip

and set on-going goals for the future.

Then there is a posttrip slide show to which families and friends are invited. Even the shy girls are eager to grab the microphone and tell what happened in their "special" slides.

'That's us at the end of our canoe trip. Some of us are crying, and some of us are laughing, and some of us are almost crying because we're so proud," says Vera. And the other girls laugh, savoring the victory of that moment.

Several weeks later each girl who wants to do so will present the trip slides to her class at school.

An awed classmate asks Sherry, "Did you really paddle 200 miles in a canoe?" Sherry will never be known as "that lazy kid" again.

"Weren't you afraid of snakes?" one of Lynn's classmates asks. Lynn will never be known as "that girl that sits at the back and never talks" again.

Three months later, the two volunteers get all 10 of the girls together for a trip reunion. Many of the girls have kept in touch by phone, despite the fact that they may live across the city from each other.

On a wiener roast in a city park, they remember their trip. It's not quite the same thing as the night when thunder crashed around their pup tents or the time when the canoe capsized and the lunch was lost.

But they're not the same either. They remember how poorly they used to get along with their teachers. difficult they used to fiind their schoolwork, or how they always used to get into trouble. And they realize how much easier life seems today.

"I learned on the trip not to be so disagreeable and how to talk things out instead of fighting. Every Friday night we have a powwow at our house now. My little sister doesn't really understand about huddle-ups yet, but if we get in a mess we have one anyway," a poised young Vera tells her volunteer.

Does Girls' Adventure Trails really change girls? Ask the 10 giggling hotdog-eaters. A year ago all seemed destined for failure. Today they look like any 10 average teenagers.

But getting Girls' Adventure Trails started was not easy. Even though community leaders recognized the growing problems of juvenile delinquency, even though schools knew many students couldn't fit into conventional learning patterns, support for this pioneering program with its unique, unproved aproach did not come automatically.

For whoever heard of girls being able to camp in the wilderness for 26 days, much less learning to solve their problems that way?

Chapter III. FROM IDEA TO REALITY

Since 1946, the social service agencies of Dallas have recognized the good results of therapeutic camping for youngsters. The reason has been the success of the Salesmanship Club's Boys Camp.

When a boy is seriously disturbed, when his family problems seem unsurmountable and he is withdrawn, when other agencies "give up," he may be sent to live at the Salesmanship Club's wooded camp.

There boys live, year-round, in canvastopped hogans which they construct and maintain themselves. They cook many meals over campfires. Using rudimentary tools, they build sanitary facilities, group buildings, and trails.

In this uncomplicated setting, disturbed boys acquire self-sufficiency so that they can function in the larger society to which they will eventually return.

Counselors and staff have followed the philosophy that no effort is too great to help a youngster in trouble. The Salesmanship Club's 450 business executive members have worked long and hard to finance the boys' program. They have given many hours of personal involvement with the boys.

Over the 20-year period that Campbell Loughmiller served as director, he developed group work techniques now known as "reality therapy."

"We do not spend a lot of time helping the boy see what made him behave as he did in a particular situation. Our emphasis is on helping him see how he can improve next time. We do not dwell on failure, but on the chance to succeed," Loughmiller says.

Of the hundreds of boys served, 70 percent have achieved either a good or a fair improvement in personal and social adjustment status. Schoolwork has improved for most. Many of the delinquent boys who have participated in the program have not returned to the court for any further offenses.

In 1964 Dr. Eli M. Bower and Dr. Nicholas Hobbs, nationally acclaimed specialists in treatment and education of emotionally troubled children, conducted an evaluation of the camp. Recognizing that a few weeks of preventive work is worth many months of cure, they recommended development of a short-term program dealing with boys showing early signs of emotional problems.

In 1967 the Salesmanship Club initiated the Boys' Adventure Trails program, a four-week wilderness camping trip for eight boys who were on the verge of trouble. Two male counselors accompanied the boys.

"The Adventure Trails program was thus conceived largely as a preventive program that would offer constructive group experiences that would enhance a boy's sense of worth, his self-confidence, and his

self-identity. It was never felt that the four weeks in the Adventure Trails program would 'cure the problem,' nor was there any illusion that it would resolve any deep-seated personality conflicts," Loughmiller has explained.

"The goal was thought of as helping a boy to deal with incipient problems more effectively, to obtain just the extra help he might need to carry on successfully. If this could be done, it might prevent serious trouble and a heavier investment later," said Loughmiller.

So successful was Adventure Trails that soon officials from a state mental hospital and from school classrooms requested and got special Adventure Trails trips for their wards and students.

For girls, however, there was no comparable program. Less prone than boys to act out their problems in publicly offensive ways, emotionaly disturbed girls were easily overlooked by families, schools, and their communities. Yet mental health professional youth workers know girls have problems.

"Nationally, the clinic population includes twice as many boys as girls, because society is more protective of girls. But in adulthood, more women than men are in mental institutions," pointed out a psychiatric social worker for Dallas Child Guidance.

Aware that girls needed help, too, the Salesmanship Club agreed to pilot a Girls' Adventure Trails trip in the summer of 1969 if a cosponsoring organization could be found. But potential sponsors did not agree that wilderness camping could help girls.

"You need a regular camp with cabins. Girls can't rough it like boys. For any girls' program you stress homemaking skills," protested one organization after another.

These criticisms were aimed at the very heart of the Adventure Trails program, which envisioned getting girls away from their usual settings of failure.

Wilderness camping, it was felt, would give girls, as well as boys, a new focus of effort away from books and structured activities. Athletic and camping skills, which girls could easily master, would give them the self-confidence they lacked.

At last the YWCA agreed to cosponsor one pilot trip. It was a resounding success. Yet without an ongoing sponsor, Girls' Adventure Trails would have disappeared for lack of funds, had Joe Balisteri, then a member of the Salesmanship Club's Camp Board, not taken an interest. The father of three young girls himself, he was determined that Girls' Adventure Trails should fill a major gap in Dallas' youth services

He discussed the possibility with the Dallas public school district, child guidance clinic, juvenile department, and county welfare agency, as well as with the Dallas Community Council, a body which coordinates activities of the city's various social agencies. All thought the program sounded like a good

idea, but none offered financial support.

These consultations did, however, lead to several innovations that modified the Salesmanship Clubs' Adventure Trails program into a program that would suit the special needs of girls. These were:

1. Initiation of an objective evaluation coupled with a one-year follow-up program on each girl, to measure program success

2. The use of volunteer workers to implement the follow-up program and to give friendly support to the girls and their parents throughout the adventure experience

3. The supportive involvement of parents before, during, and after the adventure trip

4. The use of three counselors for each trip—a man, his wife, and a single female counselor—working with groups of ten girls

5. Group reunions several months after each trip

6. Providing the opportunity for each girl to show selected slides of her adventure trip experiences to her classmates at school in an effort to give her additional encouragement and an improved image among her peers.

"Girls' Adventure Trails leaders worked especially well with other agencies in all their planning. They got the right people together and determined how to do it. They were able to get referrals from public schools and other agencies. They got enough funding to cover the first two years," said the planning director for group work and recreation for the Dallas Community Council.

It was not long before there were enough interested citizens to form a 30-member Board of Directors. After Girls Adventure Trails was incorporated in April, 1970, it applied to the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for funds.

The group's enthusiasm and the need for a predelinquency program for girls attracted HEW's support. For the year 1970-71, HEW's Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Administration (YDDDA) provided a grant of $63,199, requiring 25 percent in matching funds from the community.

HEW personnel suggested that Girls' Advanture Trails contact the Texas Criminal Justice Council for further funds. The council gave the program a $10,000 grant, which was matched by $6,667 from the community. The council's grant and the matching funds, along with the HEW grant, gave state, and local sources. This funding approach eliminated possible overlaping of monies used in planning programs to combat delinquency and mental illness.

Local support was obtained by emphasizing the basic success of wilderness camp settings in helping girls overcome failure. This success had already been demonstrated by the Salesmanship Club's program. The comparatively low cost of Girls' Adventure Trails, which required little capital invest-

ment and made use of volunteer aides, also was emphasized.

For the first year (1970-71) a $106,000 budget was established, using the two grants, gifts from organizations and individuals, and fees from parents, whose share of the trip costs was set at approximately 15 percent. The Junior League of Dallas donated $12,000 and agreed to supply volunteer workers.

Allan Spearman, who had spent nearly five years as a park ranger in the U.S. National Park Service and two and one-half years as a counselor supervisor for the Salesmanship Club's Boys Camp, was hired as project director.

A surplus city fire station was purchased as a headquarters building, meeting place, and warehouse for camping equipment. The program director assumed intake duties and also served as a counselor on an early trip. A full-time secretary-bookkeeper was employed. Of the two counselor teams hired, both male counselors had gained experience as counselors with the Salesmanship Club's program.

Ten trips, serving 100 girls, were successfully completed the first year. But obtaining enough qualified referrals of girls at the "preventive stage" to balance the group structure selectively was a problem.

Many early referrals had, in fact, entered an "interventive stage" of problem development. In order to have complete groups, these girls were accepted although goals for improving their attitudes were limited.

A subjective evaluation of all follow-up reports on all ex-campers indicated that nearly three-fourths of the girls served in the first year successfully maintained their positive attitude and behavioral changes during the follow-up period. Those girls with minimal gains or serious problems were referred to other community resources for help.

In the second year of the program (1971-72) the budget was increased to $152,000, again financed through Federal, State and local grants. Twelve trips were scheduled. As word of Girls' Adventure Trails' success spread through the community, referrals were more easily obtained.

Three new positions, counselor supervisor, intake coordinator and part-time secretary, were created. The first two positions were filled from the counselor ranks. One out-of-state counselor couple who had been in training with Girls' Adventure Trails for seven months returned to their own state's program. Two new counselor couples were hired and trained to round out the staff.

Soon the Brownwood State Home and School for Girls, a correctional institution for delinquents under the Texas Youth Council Agency, learned of the unique approach of the program and requested a pilot trip for ten of its students. This request enabled Girls' Adventure to offer a thirteenth trip in addition

to the 12 already scheduled that year within the same budget.

The trip was so successful that Brownwood has begun development of its own therapeutic wilderness camp program, with the help of Girls' Adventure Trails. When in operation, it will be the model for all the State schools serving the Texas Youth Council Agency.

A $20,000 donation to Girls' Adventure Trails from a private foundation led to the purchase of 1,080 acres of rolling East Texas wilderness. As additional monies are available, a long-term camp for more seriously disturbed girls will be developed.

Meanwhile, Girls' Adventure Trails continues using the wilderness areas of the Southwest for trips for the less severely troubled girls it now serves. Winter trips usually go into Big Bend National Park. Late spring and early fall trips may penetrate the rugged mountains of New Mexico or Colorado. Summer trails lead to the wilderness rivers of Arkansas and Missouri for canoe trips.

"For the next five years Girls' Adventure Trail's goal is to provide a progressively broadening range of services for the troubled girl between the ages of 10 and 15. The program plans to serve 150 girls per year, develop the long-term camp, create a halfway house in Dallas, and widely disseminate the program's philosophy and techniques as a national model program," said the program director.

Chapter IV. THE GROUP AND ITS COUNSELORS

What is the force which molds a group of 10 troubled girls of diverse backgrounds into individuals able to function adequately in their chaotic worlds?

At the heart of Girls' Adventure Trails are the girls themselves and their counselors, interacting as the body and mind of a healthy person. Like the mind, the counselors give appropriate signals and positive leadership. Like the body, the group incorporates them and uses them to carry out a life style all its own.

The mind knows what it wishes the body to do. But without the help of the body the mind can do nothing. The counselors cannot take all the responsibility for the actions of the group. If they did, the members would simply rely upon the counselors and never internalize the problem-solving skills that will enable them to function in their own homes.

So the group itself is utilized to teach healthy actions to its members. It draws its direction and motivation from the counselors. But it depends upon its own resources to work the miracle of change.

The importance of the group has always been stressed in the work of the Salesmanship Club's Boys Camp, from which Girls' Adventure Trails evolved.

A study of the boys' camp undertaken by Larry R. Kimsey, M.D., with camp caseworker Mary Frost stated the following seven attributes of the program that have helped to account for its success.

1. Activation of the reality principle and subordination of the pleasure principle through the necessity of living together in a natural setting where survival is contingent upon the recognition of reality.

2. Continuous group therapy through a process of self-and peer-examination and understanding of feelings.

3. Appropriate expression of aggression and development of the ability to verbalize feelings rather than acting on them (A corollary to this is the understanding of the difference between feelings and actions, i.e., learning to accept feelings and control actions.)

4. The transformation of basic mistrust into basic trust.

5. The enhancement of the process of internalization and identification with adult males secure in their own masculine identities.

6. Understanding, acceptance, and tolerance of their families without the need to punish or retaliate.

7. The development of feelings of pride, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-discipline.

By balancing its groups and carefully selecting and training its counselors, Girls' Adventure Trails has incorporated these attributes into its own program.

The intake coordinator selects a girl on the basis of the possibilities for growth she will bring to the group itself. For instance, two seriously troubled girls are balanced by two with a more positive orientation. Each group contains at least two blacks and other members of minority groups. Economically, each group contains two girls from a poverty-income level, six middle-class girls, and perhaps, two semi-affluent girls.

Each group encompasses a two-year age span, but the intake coordinator seeks to match girls by size and maturity levels as well. A very small, immature, overly protected 13-year-old, for instance, might do better with average-sized 11 and 12-year-olds than she would with a group her own age.

To state that group-work methods are centered around goal-setting and problem-solving techniques is one thing. To see them in action is another.

Setting a group goal and attaining it is a learning process, but it can also be a real adventure. One group, which set its goal to hike up a Colorado mountain, awoke on the trail one September morning to find eight inches of snow. For three days they shivered and slipped up the mountainside until they reached the summit.

"Even if there had been a tornado, we wouldn't have given up," reported one young mountain climber in all seriousness.

Gradually, group goals bring about individual actions. If the temperature is 103 degrees on the canoe trip and Lisa feels like giving up, she doesn't do it. She knows she would hold back the group.

If Beth loses her canteen on the six-day backpacking hike, then the other girls share their water with her. Otherwise they can't go on.

Fun activities also help girls attain goals. Learning camp songs, baking bread over a camp fire, burying each other in a sand dune —all help the girls learn a more positive reaction to life.

When the girls are cold and wet, they learn to encourage each other rather than complain and feel depressed.

Just as significant for a girl's future, however, may be reaching her goals of learning to solve problems. She learns to recognize that large problems grow from small ones and that problems can be solved by frank discussion, by setting new goals, and by following a different kind of action.

Through the skillful use of huddle-ups and pow-wows, through helpful example and positive attitudes, the counselors lead the group to a new cohesiveness.

By the end of the trip a group of girls who seemed headed for future trouble may have incorporated such typical middle-class standards, as the feeling of pride earned by work well done, the acceptance of the disabilities of others, the realistic appraisal of one's own strengths and weaknesses, and the desire to help others and accept help from others. These ideas, learned from the group experience, will hope-

fully stay with the girls all their lives and enable them to adjust to society.

Since the counselors are the source from which the group draws its own strengths, their role is an important one. The young married couple and the single woman counselor who go on each trip, however, are chosen neither solely for their professional standing nor for their years of experience.

Girls' Adventure Trails counselors have been, for the most part, recent college graduates with little work experience. They are trained to become paraprofessionals.

"There is almost no way other than on-the-job training that a person can be trained to be a counselor. We look for young adults who are secure in their own identity, enjoy outdoor living, and have a strong motivation to work with youth," said Tim Blocker, counselor supervisor, who was the program's first counselor.

Because many young people today are interested in helping others and finding out more about themselves, Girls' Adventure Trails has had no problem recruiting counselors. There is a long list of applicants for the single woman position. Although fewer married couples have applied, those that have been accepted have remained in the program for long periods.

The low turnover is fortunate, for a counselor is not considered well qualified until he or she has at least three trips in his experience. It may be a full year before the counselor feels at ease in meeting all situations.

Let's look at the training and duties expected of 23-year-old Mike and Candy. When they made their first trip as counselors, the third counselor was 24-year-old Nancy. With a year's experience, she gave invaluable training.

Two weeks before they began the pretrip routine, Mike and Candy confered with the counselor supervisor and program director to learn about the Girls' Adventure Trails philosophy. They studied the logs counselors had written on other trips, comparing different trips and writing reports about the development trends they found.

A training camp-out was taken to broaden their basic experience in the wide range of camping skills that would be needed.

Then on their first trip, the counselor supervisor stayed with the group until it left for its mountain hike. He assured the counselors that he was "on call" by telephone whenever they needed help. If needed, he would rejoin the group.

Besides doing group work, counselors have a surprising number of other duties. The three counselors must write a daily log of activities. The log is to include accounts of problems that come up during the day and any development in girls' personalities that appear helpful. The log is prepared every night after the girls are put to sleep.

Once a week the counselors write an additional progress report on each girl to inform the Girls' Adventure Trails staff who are work-

ing with parents. The positive or negative changes in each girl's behavior are reported.

A typical report is as follows: "Jane shows signs of becoming more helpful and responsible and less hyperactive, demanding, and selfish. She has not suffered from her respiratory ailments this week. When expected to work out problems rather than bicker, Jane does quite well. She attempts to avoid fulfilling her responsibilities less frequently than before."

Counselors must develop into reasonably good photographers. They are supplied ten rolls of film to photograph activities of the group for use at parent meetings, school slide shows, and other program presentations.

Dealing with the emotionally disturbed, plus having the responsibility for the daily camping routine, make the counselors' job an exhausting one. These counselors have the responsibility for helping the group develop awareness, cohesiveness, and pride. Through the counselors' attitude and leadership, the group establishes attitudes of love, concern, and respect for each other.

The counselors must expect the best from campers and get it, set and maintain realistic limits, and be consistent in follow-through on corrections and decisions. They evaluate problems continually, making sure everyone understands problems, solutions, and agreements.

Throughout it all, the counselors must maintain an accepting, positive attitude, serving as an example of acceptable behavior under all kinds of emergency situations.

The counselors must use every bit of their ingenuity to cope with experiences which are not covered in their manual. What do they do, for instance, when the group loses its way on the hike and can't find water?

Loss of group control and runaways are most feared by counselors.

On one of Girls' Adventure Trail's first trips, some of the girls made contact with boys from a nearby camp group. Later, one of the girls was seen swallowing six red pills that she claimed were drugs. The counselors had to rush her to the nearest hospital to get her stomach pumped, only to discover that the pills contained merely vitamins. The girl finally admitted taking them from the group's supply as a lark. From this kind of experience, counselors have learned that they must find secluded campsites, away from other people and outside distractions.

Counselors never use punishment to change behavior. Instead, they rely on natural consequences and peer pressure. If a girl is careless on the trail and loses some of her clothes, then she has to do without them. No one fusses at her or restricts her future behavior. If she ruins the French toast for breakfast, the other girls' complaints encourage her to be more careful the next time.

But in an emergency, a counse-

lor may have to use physical restraints to cope with a violent girl.

On one trip, Patty played the role of group clown, but also frequently threatened to beat up the other girls. Having grown up in a poverty neighborhood, she had learned to use violent behavior to cope with her daily routine. When the other girls tried to help her in a huddle-up, Patty picked up a rock and appeared ready to throw it at them.

The male counselor grabbed her hand. Patty attemped to fight with him.

"You're only picking on me because I'm black!" she screamed. While restraining her, the counselor talked calmly, assuring her that he liked her as a person and wanted to help her. The incident became a turning point. Through group discussion, Patty realized that she did not like being the group's clown and that she did not really want to be thought of as a tough girl. After this huddle-up, she became much more verbal than before.

Physical force is never recommened, but sometimes counselors must restrain an actively agressive girl to protect the other members of the group.

Even though the counselors have the support of the supervisor, they must have the stamina to remain accepting and secure of their own worth in the face of much apparent rejection.

Before the trip ends, counselors help the group learn to transfer their personal trip goals and techniques to home and school by expressing the positives for each girl. They discuss the probable difficulties the girls will encounter when they return home, emphasize the value of discussing problems, and encourage setting of goals for home and school.

Throughout the trip, girls frequently complain about the hardships, the food, the weather, the problem-solving sessions, and, sometimes, the counselors. Yet on their return, the same girls may seek to emulate the counselors' positive behavior and thereby prove that the counselors have been successful.

Chapter V. ACCENTING THE POSITIVES—FROM INTAKE TO EVALUATION

"I wish there were some way to help parents understand that admitting they have a problem with their children is nothing for which they should be ashamed. Many parents who should have gotten help when their daughter was 11 years old wait to seek it until she is 13. By then her behavior patterns are established," said Girls' Adventure Trails intake coordinator, Carol Blocker.

From intake through posttrip evaluation, Girls' Adventure Trails' staff emphasizes the positive step the families are taking in seeking help. After the trip, volunteers continue encouragement for further growth.

Let's watch tall, sophisticated, 13-year-old Peggy and her mother, Mrs. Smith, go through the intake procedure. Peggy has been termed an incorrigible by the juvenile department. She knows that the next step for her may be a juvenile correctional institution; so here she is.

Despite her hostile composure, Peggy, like most girls referred to Girls' Adventure Trails, is worried about being shipped off on a month-long camp-out. Missing school is okay because the teachers don't like her and she has failing grades anyway. She's been suspended several times for talking rudely to the principal.

But what about those counselors? Won't they just be glorified teachers fussing at her for 24-hours a day? If they are, she'll run away again, as she has done seven times before. Running away is the way she escapes from a stepfather who does nothing but get drunk and a mother who doesn't understand.

Mrs. Smith has had to take time from her office job to bring Peggy for the interview. She has already missed a lot of work getting Peggy reinstated in school after her suspensions. If she keeps missing work, she will lose her job. Why is the juvenile department picking on her, asking her to bring Peggy here?

She blinks back the tears. She's always worked hard to raise her children right. What has she done to deserve having a daughter who looks like an open invitation to every boy she meets? It is no secret that Peggy has been carrying on with those boys she knows when she runs away. Mrs. Smith slumps into her chair.

"Peggy, we're glad you're here. You've been referred to us because your parole officer believes you have the potential to do something about getting on top of your problems," says the intake director.

Peggy blinks her false eyelashes. This wasn't what she had expected to hear. But her only response is to expel a cloud of smoke into her mother's face.

Soon they are looking at a slide show of a previous trip. Peggy sees

girls climbing a mountain with packs on their backs, exploring a cave, singing on a bus, swimming in a rocky desert water hole. The girls look like terrible "goody-goodies."

"Every girl who goes on a Girls' Adventure Trails trip has some kind of problem, but they are learning the skills they need to solve the problem," says the intake coordinator.

After the slide show Mrs. Smith asks about costs and learns the fee is determined by a sliding scale based on family income. When Peggy asks about what kind of clothes she needs, the coordinator gives her a printed list. Soon they take the application form home to discuss it before filling it out.

When families are referred to Girls' Adventure Trails, they must take the responsibility of actually coming in for the preliminary interview themselves. Of every ten families who come in for a first interview, eight return the application, indicating they wish to be accepted.

Since Mrs. Smith does return the application, a second interview is set up during which Peggy and her mother are seen separately. Peggy learns that the purpose of the trip is both adventure and a chance to find out what her strong points are. She learns that she will be able to develop those qualities in herself that need improvement.

"This is also a chance to make new friends," says the intake coordinator.

The intake director encourages both the girl and her mother to describe the problem situation in their family and to set goals which they hope to achieve. Since most of the girls referred to the program have problems at home, at school, and with their peers, they are urged to make specific goals for improvement in all three areas.

Mrs. Smith has additional responsibilities. She must get a physical examination for her daughter, pay a portion of the cost, and promise to attend parent meetings. Even the most poverty-stricken parents are charged an $8 minimum, since they could not buy their daughter's food for a month for that amount and the fee is thought to encourage parents to follow through with the program.

After the second interview Peggy is accepted. The intake worker checks with the probation officer and the school system to see if they have the results of psychological tests or diagnostic evaluations that will help Girls' Adventure Trails staff better understand Peggy and her family. These are included in the intake report.

If at all possible, Girls' Adventure Trails accepts girls who want to participate. But it must reject the retarded who cannot abstract well enough to benefit from the problem sessions, the handicapped who cannot participate in the strenuous physical routine, the seriously troubled, and those with debilitating allergies.

Yet it has accepted girls who were convulsive, if their seizures

could be controlled by medication; overweight girls; minimaly brain-injured girls; hyperactive girls on tranquilizers; even one mute girl.

After a trip date is assigned the trip counselors visit Peggy in her home. While answering parents' questions, they are able to note Peggy's relationship to her parents, brothers, and sisters. They gain some insight into how the family functions as a unit.

Together at an orientation meeting, the parents and girls begin learning Girls' Adventure Trails methodology of group work four days before trip departure. There counselors narrate slides of the trip sequence, of huddle-ups, pow-wows, problem sessions, and team jobs. Counselors explain that both the group and individual girls will work on goal attainment and that goals may be immediate or long-range.

"You girls are going to have fun and lots of learning experiences. And you will have the opportunity for making basic attitude changes. You will learn a sense of responsibility, learn how to get along better with others, and feel better about yourselves," the counselors point out.

"Everyone here has already set personal goals to make the trip a success. So you have already helped the group," the counselors add.

Parents and girls are reminded to write to each other throughout the trip.

After the girls and parents get a chance to inspect the tents, sleeping bags, backpacks, canoes, and cooking equipment to be used, they begin to feel that they are very important persons, indeed. They have taken a step that the counselors say is good. And there is hope for change.

The next morning the girls meet with their counselors to plan their itinerary, menus, and division of chores. The girls themselves make the decision as to what they want to see on the trip. They may visit the McDonald Observatory or the Alamo. What mountain will they choose to climb for their group goal?

Most important, they agree to use Girls' Adventure Trails methodology to solve problems. They discuss huddle-ups and problem sessions in detail. They agree to stay with the group at all times. They agree that if they feel like running away they will ask for help rather than actually do it.

Peggy and her mother are tense on departure morning. Suddenly Peggy is absolutely sure that she does not want to go on the trip. Some of the other girls are so babyish. Sure, the counselors are nice, but a month is a long time!

Before she knows what is happening, the counselors have gathered all the girls together and herded them on to the bus. They are on their way!

Even though she is encouraged to write her parents, Peggy, unlike the other girls, never sends a letter throughout the trip. But she does make a sign that she holds up for the counselor to photograph. At the

parent meeting, Mrs. Smith smiles through her tears when she sees her daughter holding the sign that says, "Hello Mom and Don!"

At the posttrip evaluation counselors help Peggy and her mother discuss the trip informally. Peggy is asked what she disliked or liked most about the trip, how she fit into the group, and what she learned about solving her problems.

"I learned to talk about the things that make me mad, no matter what they are, instead of running way. I think I can do that at home now, too. I never really tried to talk to my stepfather before," Peggy says.

Both Peggy and her mother set ongoing goals. Because of this family's many problems, they are referred to a family guidance agency for further counseling. Peggy's evaluation report and trip reports will be of great help to this agency.

Does Peggy remember to keep her goal? Not long after the trip, her stepfather is arrested for driving while intoxicated. Both Peggy and her mother testify in his behalf. Peggy is attending school. She still tests her parents, as most teenagers do, but, so far, she hasn't run away again.

Whether a family is referred for further counseling or not, the volunteer worker begins routine follow-up after the trip ends. The follow-up is aimed at making sure that the gains made in the program are not lost.

Chapter VI. THOSE WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS

Were it not for the quality of the volunteer service given by dedicated lay people, Girls' Adventure Trails could not be nearly so effective.

What is the role of the volunteer? Parents see the volunteer as a friend who really cares about them and their daughter. She is someone who can give their daughter the advice and understanding she needs, but sometimes cannot accept from her own mother and father.

The girls see the volunteer as a model of everything they would like to be—an accepting, kind person who helps others.

The Girls' Adventure Trails' staff sees her as a trained helper willing to donate about 100 hours a year in maintaining personal contact with families of troubled girls. During the first two years of the Girls' Adventure Trails program the Junior League of Dallas was the only organization that could provide volunteers able to meet the time and involvement commitments required by the program.

With the cooperation of the Girls' Adventure Trails director, the League recruited and trained its own volunteers. A chairman solved the many administrative problems involved in working with volunteers. She listened to problems, decided when further training was necessary, and carried it out.

However, the volunteer role may be filled by any woman who is capable and willing to serve the need, whether she is affiliated with a service organization or not.

Training for new volunteers may include a seminar at which a doctor who specializes in treatment of adolescent girls describes the turmoil of the teen years, and one at which a juvenile department director who works with girls on probation explains the environment and family problems that often cause delinquency. In addition, the Girls' Adventure Trails' counselor supervisor and intake worker teach the volunteers ways of working with parents and girls.

A volunteer meets her five assigned girls and their parents for the first time at the Girls' Adventure Trails orientation. She has read the intake report summaries on the girls who have been assigned to her and can therefore chat with the parents in a constructive manner.

At trip departures and arrivals, at parent meetings, at trip evaluations, the volunteer is there. During the trip she writes letters to the girls and parents to write and attend parent meetings.

During phone calls to parents, she may receive information that should be brought out at parent discussions. If so, she is free to speak up at the meeting. Throughout the trip she is informed of "her" girls' progress through direct staff contact and reading copies of

the counselors' logs and weekly reports.

On the next to the last night of the trip, Girls' Adventure Trails' staff and volunteers drive to the campsite, usually a state park about 90 miles away, to join the girls for supper and the evening pow-wow. It is a surprise visit for the girls, but not for the counselors.

As the volunteers arrive, the girls girls squeal excitedly. Many throw themselves into the women's arms as if they were favorite relatives.

A look into the bus shows that the volunteers' pictures are tacked to the wall. Below them may be posted a favorite letter which the volunteer has written to the group. The pride that the girls take in their "own" volunteer—her family, her husband, her appearance—leaves no doubt that the girls have chosen her as an ideal for their own future.

After the trip the volunteer is included in each girl's evaluation conference. She attends the post-trip slide show as part of the family.

During the follow-up period she telephones or has some other type of contact with the girls once a week, encouraging them to continue with their goals. After the first several months, she gradually diminishes her phone calls to one a month.

Several weeks after the trip, the volunteers help each girl who wants to do so present a slide show of her trip to her class at school. Finally the volunteers have the responsibility for planning two group reunions at two- to three-month intervals after the trip.

The principal activity of a group reunion may vary from a wiener roast to a hike or bike expedition. Some groups even plan to visit an amusement park for a day. Volunteers are responsive to reasonable desires of the girls, who, in turn, must help plan the reunion within a prescribed budget. The original counselors are always invited to the reunion.

Many volunteers continue to stay in contact with their assigned families even after the follow-up period. Long after she has worked with a girl, a volunteer may get a crisis phone call from the girl's mother asking her to use Girls' Adventure Trails techniques to "reach" her daughter.

Sometimes the girl herself calls and asks for help with her parents. If the volunteer feels professional help is needed, she may ask the Girls' Adventure Trails staff to assist or to make a referral to another helping agency.

Not all the girls and their families relate to volunteers as friends. A family sinking in the quicksand of its own problems may completely reject a volunteer. In such cases, the volunteer chairman encourages volunteers to realize that their work with such families may have long-range effects, even though they may never know about it.

The relationship that volunteers build with families is one that could cause real damage if broken. Consequently, the program director and volunteer chairman emphasize to volunteers that once they have ac-

cepted an assignment they must continue through the agreed period.

Enthusiastic in their work, Girls' Adventure Trails volunteers are making the needs of troubled girls known throughout the community.

"Volunteers may see an entirely different world when they become involved with Girls' Adventure Trails. Once exposed to this service, our volunteers can never pull down the shade and not see the problems in their community," said a volunteer chairman.

Chapter VII. REHABILITATION—OR A NEW APPROACH TO EDUCATION?

As Dallas' schools, juvenile authorities, and social agencies work with Girls' Adventure Trails, each sees the program in a different light, according to its own specific needs.

While the program's goals have been slanted toward preventive therapy for troubled girls, its successful new approach to education is also evident.

Like school districts everywhere, the Dallas schools have come under increasing pressure to educate children with all kinds of learning disabilities. Consequently, administrators are enthusiastic about the way in which Girls' Adventure Trails has motivated students whose psychological problems inhibited their learning through traditional classroom methods.

In fact, school districts have been the largest referral source for Girls' Adventure Trails, as demonstrated in the first two years' record of referrals, shown below:

Referral source	1970-71	1971-72
Dallas Independent School District	41	58
Other school districts	9	7
Juvenile department	26	18
Texas Youth Council	0	10
Dallas County Child Welfare	10	6
Dallas Child Guidance Clinic	3	8
Children's homes	3	14
Family guidance center	3	1
Ex-campers and families	2	3
Hospitals	2	5
Social service agencies, etc.	2	0
Total	101	130

Despite the fact that girls must miss a month of school to make a Girls' Adventure Trails trip, nearly every school system in the county has sent at least one referral. The program is an ideal placement for girls who have a high absentee rate and do poor work in school. Girls who do not benefit from traditional methods of classroom work often make dramatic attitude improvements while on a trip, and the improved attitudes are reflected in their scholastic work when they return to school.

In an outside evaluation of the camping program, teachers reported improved classroom conduct, academic motivation, and personal behavior. Further, they reported that girls showed a continual increase in positive attitude in the area of academic motivation over a six-month period following the trip.

Girls who have missed a month of school can return to the same

classes they were in before the trip. Many achieve better grades than before.

In his book **Wilderness Road**, Campbell Loughmiller explains how boys who may miss as much as two years of formal school while at the Salesmanship Club's Boys Camp learn enough to return to their normal classes.

"What does education consist of in the first place? It involves a learner and a teacher, but the teacher may be a person or a situation—or both," he wrote.

His philosophy, and that of Girls' Adventure Trails, is that the desire to learn is inherent in every young person. If it has been deadened by years of failure, then camp experiences may revive it.

On a trip a girl may wonder why the ocotillo plant of the desert appears lifeless except after infrequent rains, how the volcanic mountain she climbed was originally formed, what the names of the fossils she found at Rock Hound State Park are and how they got there, what the call of the saucy stellar blue jay which marched into camp and ate popcorn is.

Counselors encourage the girls to write short articles or draw pictures about such interests for the newspaper that each group publishes after the trip is concluded. Writing articles and letters to their families helps the girls pass the time while traveling on the bus or during a rest period. Even poor students want to get their fair share of articles published in the trip journal, although they would not dream of contributing to the school newspaper at home.

Who are the teachers? The girls don't realize that they do have instructors in the counselors, who show such a lively interest in nature. A girl who has flunked arithmetic may, on her own, ask a counselor to help her figure mileage for the trip or quantities of ingredients for a recipe.

Books on personal improvement, which are kept in the bus library, often become dog-eared from being read by girls who say they cannot read. Newspapers published by previous groups are read from cover to cover.

Dr. Ruby Morris, who heads the Pupil Personnel Division of the Dallas Independent School District is director on the Girls' Adventure Trails board. Through her efforts the district's staff of visiting teachers, health services personnel, psychological services personnel, and counselors has been informed about the camping program. These professionals are encouraged to refer girls who can benefit from the program to Girls' Adventure Trails.

"About 1000 children per year are referred to the Pupil Personnel Division for behavior or adjustment problems that are severe enough to require thorough psychological testing. Typical problems are lying, stealing, verbal abusiveness, inability to separate from parents, school phobia, inability to get along with peers, fighting, and destructive behavior," said Dr. Morris.

"While boys act out more than girls, we have an increasing number of girls who cause problems. We

also have large numbers of girls who are withdrawn and may also benefit from Girls' Adventure Trails," Dr. Morris continued.

Each school's pupil personnel committee considers the problems of that school's students and may refer pupils to Girls' Adventure Trails. Such a committee is made up of the principal, area psychologist, visiting teacher, counselor, and nurse. Teachers attend the meetings when students in their homerooms are being discussed. When it meets, a pupil personnel committee considers all possible resources of help.

What should such a committee do, for instance, with 14-year-old Sally, who has threatened another student with a knife? Sally had seen her father kill her mother and then commit suicide. She had been treated at a mental hospital and was continuing to be treated with tranquilizers, although now back in school. When a student tried to interfere with her taking the "pills that helped her be good," Sally reached for a knife. The committee realizes that Sally needs a quick separation from the school and also from the vindictive aunt with whom she is living.

The committee refers her to Girls' Adventure Trails, which places her as an emergency case on a trip leaving almost immediately. During the month away, Girls' Adventure Trails staff and school counselors find a better home in which to place Sally when she returns. The counselors on the Girls' Adventure Trails trip, help her face the realities with which she will live in the future.

Developments within the Dallas County Juvenile Department have made it another large referral source.

Juvenile judges, influenced by recent Supreme Court decisions concerning the rights of juveniles, no longer feel free to send runaways and incorrigibles with family problems to State training schools. Yet they recognize that if troubled girls continue to live in bad family situations, they may eventually become delinquent. Such girls may be referred to Girls' Adventure Trails without a court order. Parents may be persuaded to cooperate with Girls' Adventure Trails.

During the first two years of its existence, Girls' Adventure Trails served girls with prior correctional histories as follows:

Sent to juvenile authorities, unofficial probation (usually truant)	20
Arrested by juvenile authorities, unofficial probation (usually misdemeanors)	19
Arrested, adjudicated, on official probation (misdemeanors or felonies)	15

"We have had very good success with girls we have referred to Girls' Adventure Trails. Most have not had to be referred again to us for further problems after the trip," said the supervisor of the Girls' Delinquency Division of the Dallas County Juvenile Department.

The problem for Julia, 12, and her sister, Cheryl, 10, was unstable parents. Already, an older sister had been sent to state training school. With a working mother, lots of un-

supervised time on their hands, Julia and Cheryl were associating with the sister's old gang and seemed destined for State correctional school themselves. But the juvenile department referred both Julia and Cheryl to Girls' Adventure Trails for separate trips. They made good progress on their trips. Despite their older sister's example, the younger two have yet to get into trouble.

Vera Lou and her sister, Phyllis, had both run away from family problems. Following conviction on charges of destruction of property and burglary, Vera Lou had been placed in the juvenile department's day center.

When the girls' rejecting mother had a conflict with Vera Lou, Vera Lou ran away again, taking Phyllis with her. The juvenile department sent the younger girl to Girls' Adventure Trails as an immediate intervention in a life that appeared fated for delinquency; it held Vera Lou.

During Phyllis' month away, the juvenile department made arrangements for both girls to be placed in a children's home. On the trip, counselors worked with Phyllis to prepare her for the adjustment.

Teaching a girl responsibility for her own behavior is one of Girls' Adventure Trails' major accomplishments, the juvenile officer who handled Phyllis' case feels.

"The Girls' Adventure Trails staff does not allow itself to be manipulated. If a girl creates a group disturbance, peer pressure helps solve the problem, and peer pressure is highly significant in predelinquency. By helping girls become more self-competent, the camping program also helps girls overcome the terrible self-image which most predelinquents have, the officer said.

Recognizing that probation officers have limited time for assuming extra duties, Girls' Adventure Trails often makes arrangements for getting physical examinations for Girls' Adventure Trails participants who are referred by the juvenile department and for transporting them to the necessary pretrip meetings.

The Dallas Child Guidance Clinic has referred eleven girls to the program during the first two years. Most of the girls referred were in the 10- to 12-year age group. Of course, many girls referred by schools are also receiving from psychological services at the guidance clinic.

"Girls' Adventure Trails fulfills a real need for troubled girls and teens in the community. It recognizes that isolating a girl does not help her. It does not, for example, solve problems that are based on the girls' relationship with her parents or on the fragility of the parents' marriage.

"In this program, parents, too, are involved at a motivation and participation level. They are not left alone to deal with the ambivalent feelings they may have toward their troubled daughters," said a psychiatric social worker for the clinic.

"We feel that the Girls' Adventure Trails program is just made for the 10 to 12 age group. It is a special kind of 'groupy-ness' at an age

when groups are especially important," she said

The child guidance staff especially likes the way Girls' Adventure Trails teaches children to communicate through huddle-ups and powwows.

"We want families to learn to huddle-up. We like the way children are given responsibility for their behavior by setting goals and living up to them. Parents, too, learn to formulate goals through the program," she said.

While the child guidance clinic finds the 10- to 12-year age group best for therapeutic camping, the juvenile department would like to see the program extended to girls older than the 16-year age limit.

The age range of girls served during the first two years of Girls' Adventure Trails is as follows:

Age	Number Served
10 years	17
11 years	41
12 years	50
13 years	62
14 years	29
15 years	25
16 years	6

Everyone who works with Girls' Adventure Trails agrees that the program is a needed one. Without the program, resources for helping troubled girls would be limited at the very time that the number of troubled children is increasing.

Chapter VIII. EVALUATING THE RESULTS

"My attitude was pretty bad when I started the trip, but in a week I realized that I love my family and I had to have a good attitude and have good behavior so that other people could have respect for me. Anybody can have a good and bad attitude when they want to" wrote one young camper for the trip newspaper.

It is not unusual for counselors to hear such statements as that.

The results of a recent evaluation of Girls' Adventure Trails reveals that the majority of girls in the program do attain a more positive attitude toward themselves, their parents, and their teachers. The more positive attitude of girls toward teachers and schools is especially significant because 45 percent of the girls studied had serious scholastic problems.

The originators of Girls' Adventure Trails realized that, if they were to find the most effective methods of helping troubled girls, they needed a thorough evaluation of the program from the very beginning.

Consequently, beginning with the very first trip, testing instruments were developed and girls, parents, and teachers were tested before each trip, immediately afterward and six months later.

EPIC Diversified Systems Corporation of Tucson, Arizona, was retained to document and summarize the program's progress during Girls' Adventure Trail's first two years of operation.

EPIC used a sample of 100 campers, not only analyzing the girls' reports about themselves but also considering the reports of parents and teachers about the girls. Counselors' reports on girls' progress were also used.

EPIC created a number of performance objectives for the program. By the end of the camping experience, the girls should significantly increase their positive responses toward themselves, their school, and their teachers, as measured by the girls' self-reports (Student Attitude Scale); significantly increase their positive response toward personal and school behavior standards, as measured by teacher observation reports (Pupil Behavior Inventory); and significantly increase their positive response toward family, school, and peer relations, as measured by parent observations.

EPIC found statistically significant change in the Student Attitude Scale, which measured the girls' own attitudes toward school and teachers. It also found statistically significant increases in the academic motivation of the girls according to teacher observations.

The statistical analysis of the data revealed that the results varied considerably in some instances, indicating differences in progress among the girls. The results reported for the performance objec-

tives were group mean (average) data.

The overall results demonstrated that the program did have a definite, positive impact on the girls. Counselors reported positive changes in many problem areas. Girls who participated in the program thought enough of the experience to recommend it to others. Parents and teachers observed and reported progress in the girls, and the self-reports of the girls themselves demonstrated improved attitudes.

EPIC found that 84 percent of the campers in the sample were described in intake reports as having more than one specific problem. One-third were described as having a poor self-attitude; 29 percent appeared to be acting out problems.

Specific problems mentioned are as follows:

Problem	Percent of girls with problem at intake Percent
Scholastic	45
Hostility/rebellious	24
Withdrawn/shy	24
Poor Conduct in school	23
Irresponsibility	19
Fighting/aggressive	19
Truancy	18
Temper/self-control	18
Running away	13
Personal hygiene/grooming	11
Depression	11
Anxiety/nervousness	10
Stealing	10
Smoking/drinking	10
Sexual misbehavior	7
Jealousy	5
Drug abuse	5
Fantasy/daydreams	4
Lying	3
Property destruction	2

A complete report of the EPIC evaluation is on file at the Girls' Adventure Trails office and is available to interested persons.

Articles written for the trip newspaper might best illustrate the feelings of individual girls toward the program.

One wrote: "I have learned to accept things and look at things a different way. I have learned to share and cooperate and, most of all, 'work things out.' I have also learned to help somebody out not just because they helped you but because after you do it you have a good feeling inside. There is one thing I have learned that will be most important and helpful in life and that is **responsibility**."

Still another wrote in an article about huddle-ups, "Everyone sits in a circle and contributes in the solving of the problems. All feelings get out into the open and everyone gets to know and like the real you. Everyone gets serious and tries to help you with possible problems. We make agreements to try better in manners and helping each other."

A grateful parent sent this letter to the counselors: "I know you do not have a secret recipe for making bad situations good between little girls and their parent; my daughter's attitude did not change miraculously overnight, nor did mine. All I can say is that since she participated in your wonderful program the communication gap is closing between us, and her positive attitude is consistently growing and showing itself. She has a better at-

titude toward herself and is showing remarkable progress in understanding where she fits in at home and school."

A school counselor wrote this letter: "I am convinced that you and your staff at Girls' Adventure Trails are involved in a marvelous program. One of my students, who went on the canoe trip in September, has shown so much improvement in attitude and actions that I want to tell you about it. In previous years and at the beginning of this school year, she was withdrawn and would never talk openly to her peers or teachers. She seemed angry most of the time and showed it by writing 'hate letters' and leaving them on her teachers' desks. Since the Girls' Adventure Trails trip, she has shown a new face. She talks to the class as a group now, explains her feelings privately to her teachers, and participates in class activities. She has a long way to go to become a well-adjusted individual, but she is on her way."

But what of the three out of 10 girls who went through the Girls' Adventure Trails program but did not seem to benefit? And what of the girls who are considered too seriously troubled to be accepted? For every girl accepted, Girls' Adventure Trails must turn away almost two others.

"The situation becomes much more alarming when one realizes that Girls' Adventure Trails has been exposed to only a portion of the overall local problem. The majority of really troubled girls are never referred to us in the first place because most other referral agencies realize that our program is designed only for the preventive-type cases," said a report on Girls' Adventure Trails' preliminary plans for a long-term camp for troubled girls.

To help such girls, Girls' Adventure Trails is developing its 1,080 acres of East Texas wilderness property into a permanent camp. It will have as its model both the Salesmanship Club's Boys' Camp and a similar wilderness girls' camp, E-Nini-Hassee, in Floral City, Florida. The latter has proven over a long period of time that the most troubled girls can be rehabilitated through therapeutic camping.

The eventual development cost of the camp will be $330,000. Operating year-round, it will serve 75 to 150 girls per year, or 40 to 50 girls at a time, depending upon the individual progress of girls served. It will have an operating budget of under $200,000. The goal will be to return most girls to their home and parents after three to six months of camping.

Residential facilities in the camp will be temporary constructions built of pine poles and canvas by the girls themselves. Away from the stress of community and formal school, the girls will have time for healing emotional wounds that are not incurable.

Chapter IX. GIRLS ADVENTURE TRAILS' PHILOSOPHY SPREADS

It has been said that "nothing succeeds like success." As word of Girls' Adventure Trails' ability to change troubled lives spreads, many agencies, institutions, and professionals have expressed interest in adapting the program to their own uses.

For some, a mirror-image replication of the program is the goal. For others, with special needs or special resources, a custom-planned program of their own is better. Like artists, they view the Girls' Adventure Trails scene with eyes of introspection. Their resulting "masterpiece" retains the basic content, but interprets shapes and forms to their own mood.

Let us look at the way in which the Brownwood State Home and School for girls has used the Girls' Adventure Trails philosophy in helping to rehabilitate its already delinquent students.

Of all the correctional institutions administered by the Texas Youth Council, Brownwood is one of the newest and most innovative. In attempting to rehabilitate the 115 girls between 12-18 years of age who are confined there, it is developing a program that might become a model for Texas and the nation.

"Girls who are committed to our care are different from girls who are functioning in their community only in the respect that they do not know how to meet their needs in ways that are appropriate to society," said Director Ron Jackson.

Lacking social skills, the girls see adults as enforcers rather than potential allies. Unable to solve problems, they run away, either physically or through alcohol, drugs, or sex. Without social and problem-solving skills, they have a very low concept of themselves.

To overcome these lacks, Brownwood has established major programs. The home-like atmosphere at the school allows for creative dorm activities, pleasant meals, and learning household skills. A recreation program teaches girls to utilize leisure time in such constructive activities as sports, crafts, group games, talent shows and group outings. An educational program allows girls to achieve scholastic success by learning at their own pace on an individual contract system.

A treatment staff of psychologists, social workers, and a psychiatric consultant helps girls to focus on the problems which caused their commitment and to find solutions.

When girls are considered able to function in their homes, they are returned to their families.

With the help of Girls' Adventure Trails Brownwood is setting up a therapeutic camping program to complement its already established rehabilitation effort.

"The basis of our approach at Brownwood is William Glasser's **Reality Therapy.** We find that the Girls' Adventure Trails approach of goal setting and dealing with be-

haviors rather than symptoms coincides with our own program very well," said Mart Hoffman, who has been appointed coordinator for Brownwood's camping program. A social worker, Mr. Hoffman also has experience as a counselor in both the Salesmanship Club's Boy's Camp and Girls' Adventure Trails.

Before creating its own camping program, Brownwood first sent 10 of its girls on a pilot trip using two of Girls' Adventure Trails' counselors and one of its own caseworkers. Brownwood supplied the food, supplies, and secretarial services. It made use of Girls' Adventure Trails' bus and camping gear, plus its technical and administrative experience.

The Brownwood staff found that the trip emphasized creative activity, concrete problem solving, and the accomplishment of behavioral goals. It allowed opportunity for constructive adult and peer interaction and gave students a chance to learn how to overcome difficult mental and physical challenges with the aid of positive group interaction and cooperation.

After the successful test trip, Brownwood officials felt that having their own therapeutic camping program was a must. The school applied to the Texas Criminal Justice Council for a grant to underwrite a pilot camp program that would include three counselors (a married couple and a single woman) to work with five trips during a 16-month period.

To train its first counselors, Brownwood paid their salaries and contracted their services to Girls' Adventure Trails for several months. With experienced Girls' Adventure Trails counselors as co-workers, the Brownwood counselors got on-the-job training. Two groups of Brownwood girls were taken on Girls' Adventure Trails' trips during this period.

With this training, Brownwood's counselors will be able to initiate the school's own program and train other counselors as they are needed.

"The Brownwood girls who have been on Girls' Adventure Trails trips have had good experiences. They have done something different and constructive. They have formed close, positive relationships with adults, and have learned that through cooperating and working together they can have a good time," said Mr. Hoffman.

"But one of the problems in sending our girls on regular Girls' Adventure Trails trips is that the Girls' Adventure Trails staff is not accustomed to working with the more severely troubled girls that Brownwood has. We have had to send only the girls who already are performing pretty well. With our own experienced counselors, we can send more disturbed girls," he said.

Brownwood expects to make its own camping program more effective by supplementing it with intense counseling and testing both before and after the trip.

Before each trip, the school's counseling team and their social workers will help participating girls set goals. The girls will also have a

chance for a two-day camp-out before the main trip begins, in order to become familiar with the necesary camping skills. Students will receive psychological tests evaluating their social and problem-solving skills and their self-concepts.

After the trip, the school's counseling team will help girls evaluate their experiences. Each girl will take the same battery of psychological tests.

Using the Brownwood experiences, the Texas Youth Council will determine possible implementation of therapeutic camping programs throughout its rehabilitative institutions. The Girls' Adventure Trails' philosophy will be spreading to institutions throughout the state, helping them return girls to their own homes.

The children in special education classes in the Dallas Independent School District have an entirely different problem from the delinquent girls at Brownwood. Emotionally disturbed children, minimally-brain-injured children, and children with long-term adjustment difficulties in school are placed in such classes.

"Most of these children, in spite of good intelligence, have made poor academic progress and low grades. They have been described as disturbing elements in the regular classroom and as chronically unwilling or unable to complete assignments," said the district's consultant for programs for emotionally disturbed children.

Too often, before even approaching the textbook, teachers of these children must spend time trying to make the student feel adequate, hopeful, and unafraid in a group and with adults. Too often the teacher must spend her time helping the child substitute mutual aid for competition and suspicion.

"Most of these children cannot work in groups. Many respond to group work by becoming fearful; others boast unrealistically about their academic capabilities. Most see principals and teachers as people to distrust and see rules as something against which to rebel. It is not unusual for a special education student to break out in hives at the sight of a textbook. It may take a teacher a year to get a student to the point of actually opening a workbook," said the Dallas consultant.

The Dallas Independent School District has discovered that a Girls' Adventure Trails trip or a Salesmanship Club Adventure Trails trip for boys can clear away many of the emotional problems that stand as barriers to academic achievement.

It has referred whole classes of boys or girls at a time to these programs, with outstanding success. In a surprising manner, such classes return from a trip ready to tackle their books.

How does it happen?

"If you need to change their image of adults in authority, what better way than the Adventure Trails way? The teacher isn't someone who grades your work or pushes you to finish the third row of numbers. She's someone who helps you peel potatoes, who gets blistered feet

with you, who celebrates the completion of a five-day hike with you, and who glories in and shares your accomplishments," a special education teacher explained.

"If you want a child to feel more adequate, what better way than by helping him set goals and accomplish them, all the while encouraging him to verbalize what he has done and learned?" The teacher continued.

When the special education student returns to school, she may still have a learning problem but her attitude may make it possible for her to learn anyway.

Said one mature 13-year-old who went on a trip, "Schoolwork is still hard, but I know I can learn to read. It wasn't easy for me to climb that mountain with a big pack on my back either, but I did it."

Schools throughout the nation have had to face the fact that approximately 10 percent of their students are emotionally disturbed within a mild to serious range. The child who cannot read, who disturbs others for the 12 years during which he is required by law to attend school, is programmed for future failure unless new methods of teaching him are developed.

Recognizing that all children have the right to learn, the Dallas school district provides special education classes for the emotionally disturbed. It uses Girls' Adventure Trails as a community resource to make those classes more effective.

School districts and correctional institutions in other communities might like to model their own wilderness camping programs on Girls' Adventure Trails. Every area has its own national and state parks that can be used to provide campsites. If they wish, such institutions may work with Girls' Adventure Trails in training counselors for either full-time or summer programs.

In reporting on delinquency prevention, the Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Administration of HEW (YDDPA) points out that institutions themselves have often been the cause of delinquency.

"We believe that our social institutions are programmed in such a way as to deny large numbers of young people socially acceptable, responsible, and personally gratifying roles. These institutions should seek ways of becoming more responsive to youths' needs," said a statement adopted at a national meeting ot youth experts sponsored by the YDDPA in June 1970.

Any strategy for youth development and delinquency prevention, the statement urged, should give priority to programs that assist institutions to change and thereby help troubled youth.

Some communities have tried to meet this challenge by creating new institutions such as costly residential treatment centers. But changing an institution itself by incorporating a therapeutic camping program modeled after Girls' Adventure Trails might be a more effective and less expensive way to help youth.

Since teachers often can recognize the children who will need help as early as the first grade, why

could a specialized camp program not be a routine part of every school district's services?

When existing institutions are able to merge a therapeutic camping component into ongoing programs, as Brownwood has done the costs are much less than the costs of creating a separate organization to originate such a program within a community.

Yet a communitywide approach to the problems of delinquency and mental health also has advantages, as Dallas' Girls' Adventure Trails program has shown.

As the community itself struggles to support the program, as volunteers are utilized from within the city, Girls' Adventure Trails becomes a leaven, changing attitudes at community institutions and among citizens.

Rather than blame and retribution for the girl who acts out her problems the community has a spirit of acceptance and a desire to help her change.

Rather than ignoring the withdrawn girl and dooming her to future incompetence, the community realizes her special needs and encourages her growth and mental health.

Rather than resenting the inadequacies that our society has programmed into minority race children, the community seeks new ways to help youth adjust.

Can a community create better tomorrows for today's troubled youth?

A program like Girls' Adventure Trails is one way it can.

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